1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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613 764 769 members, may not purchase them. Thus there is a proper sacrifice, haggling is not allowed to sully the offering, and still all is not totally lost.

Several deaths may accumulate within a lineage before the collection of offerings and voyage to the river are accomplished, and within this period the local lineage may not enter into marriage alliances or carry on "field worship." It is a question of ridding the local lineage of pollution so that the members may re-enter the social life of the community. Voyages to the river are performed during several prescribed periods of the year, and members of several lineages living within a region may journey there together, especially if it is a long voyage to the Damodar.

761 The eminently social nature of death, for both the deceased and the living, and its interconnection with marriage, lineage solidarity, and social identity are recognized implicitly by the Santal. Thus their very great fear of living exclusively among non-Santal is often expressed by saying, "If we live among others, who will there be to bury us?"

613 574 Besides ritual ties, the local lineage, though by no means economically corporate, is a source of mutual aid. To deny food and lodging to members of one's local lineage, while not strictly speaking unthinkable, would be the greatest of social offenses, and if adequate food and lodging are available, something that no sane Santal would contemplate. Indeed, in the absence of shortage—and sometimes even then—to provide generous hospitality to all Santal, i.e., all "kinsmen" (*peṛa hoṛ*) in the most extended sense, is a cause for joy. Generally, when "kinsmen" visit, the man of the house will meet them and cry out to his wife that "kinsmen" have come; the wife brings water, oil (which she rubs on their tired feet), and rice beer if there is

3s Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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775 In the cases of the rest (viz. those in Heaven), they have to stay there till the third generation. To make the position clear, we should remember that the Santals worship ancestor-spirits upto the grandfather (inclusive). When with the death of the house-holder and the consequent change in generations, the particular man in *Serma* (Heaven) does not any more receive propitiation on earth, his period of stay lasts till then. To illustrate the matter, let us take a concrete case. A house-holder worships ancestor-spirits upto his grandfather X. When the house-holder dies and becomes an ancestor-spirit himself, X becomes a great-grandfather to the son of the house-holder (now dead) and is re-born on the earth.

Conclusion

76 77 Such in brief are the funeral ceremonies, and the ideas of Heaven and Hell obtaining amongst the Santals. In all the ceremonials attending death, the members of the tribe take all possible precautions so that the released spirit may not haunt the abode of his near and dear ones, and may be admitted by the gods after proper purification. The other aim of the rituals is to see that the spirit may have rest, after all the toils and turmoils of 761 life, along with the ancestors. It is with a supernatural fear that the Santal looks upon death, the

Si Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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most mysterious of all episodes in human life. He associates a death in the tribe as an event which necessitates segregation of the family and the clan visited by the calamity, and not until they undergo ceremonial purification, are they thought entitled to the fuller life of the tribe, and this re-union is effected by a final community meal.

In all these socio-religious rites, the whole Santal society of the locality acts like one man. Here is a supernatural danger visiting a family. Unless the full co-operation of the tribe is received, it may be an occasion for the unconscious contamination to injure the tribe itself by its mysterious infection. So the man affected by a death in the family looks up to the tribe for help and sympathy, and the tribe in its turn helps its members during the crisis, by propitiating the super-human powers beyond our ken, who alone know the key to the mysterious phenomena round about humanity.

It is very easy to notice here also, the undoubted influence of Hinduism in the funeral customs of the Santals. But, whereas the Hindus have universalised the individual with the eternal essence, and have woven a theory of universal humanity by offering *Pindas* even to the unknown dead, their formula being "*Jagaddhitaya Krishnaya*," (to Sri Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, for the good of the Universe), the Santal, although not dreaming

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1938) 1902
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776 782 nothing was really found. One Mangla Mañjhi heard about it and it "roused his curiosity and cupidity." He now requisitioned the services of Bhima Naik, a famous exorcist, who decided upon human sacrifice to propitiate the deity guarding the treasure. Next, a lad named Chotrai was decoyed, his head severed, and the blood held in a small earthen pot and offered to the deity.

Basuki or Basumata

Apart from the hill and village spirits mentioned above, the Santals worship *Basuki* or *Basumata* for the welfare of agriculture, during the month of Ashar, with offerings of fowls and goats. Such [731] worships do not form a regular feature of the tribal calendar, but are occasional invocations during apprehended crop-failure.

Ancestor Spirits

769 761 If the idea of death has profoundly puzzled humanity, the Santals are no exception to the rule. In their crude way, they have built up a theory regarding the disembodied spirits which regards the dead ancestors with religious awe and reverence.

769 Thus it is that we see that in all festivals, public or private, *Haramko* or *Burha-Burbi* (the old man

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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755 the same finger on the earth. The *ojha* then takes a
755 sal leaf and looks intensely over it and then takes an-
824 other look over it in the similar way. A sal leaf has a number of veins which divide the surface into several compartments. In different places on the surface of a leaf the *ojha* drops oil with the index or middle finger of the right hand uttering at the same time what each oil mark is to stand for, viz., the supposed possible cause or origin of the patient's disease. The Santals [753] believe that one of the following causes brings disease, [761] death and misery:

(1) Natural causes,
(2) Human beings,
(3) *Bongas*, and
(4) The spirits of ancestors.

The *ojha* in the above way puts marks here and there on the leaf, at the same time muttering to himself that this is for such and that for such, and a third for something else, and so on, whereupon he commences to rub each mark in with his finger. Whilst rubbing, the *ojha* mutters some *Mantras*. The Santal *ojha* uses different names for oils and leaves in the *Mantra*; if the particular kind used is not mentioned in the *Mantra* the magic would be spoilt.

755 **"Tarik" or Detection of Disease by Sirom Broom:** The Santal *Ojha* draws a number of squares side by side on the earth with a twig or handle of a Sirom broom. At first three long lines are drawn parallel to one another on the ground and then a number of short lines are drawn across the above three lines, thus getting a figure with the help of a number of squares. The *ojha* then

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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night before the men start for the annual tribal hunt with utterly obscene songs and practices.

5. The fifth class of spirits are the village deities, which are the following:

1. Jaher Era (female). 2. Gosain Era (female).
3. Truko Muruko (male). 4. Marang Buru (male).
5. Parganat (male).

The Santals worship the above deities periodically in the sacred grove.

6. There are spirits of the village boundary known as *Sima bongas*, and of the outskirt of the village known as *Bahre bongas*.

7. Next come tramp or stray spirits who are spirits of persons and children dying an unnatural death.

8. The spirit of the father-in-law's household, as is believed, sometime follows the bride to her new house which is known as *Naihar bonga*. As soon as a Santal is convinced that the *Naihar bonga* has come along he will either make yearly sacrifices to him, or, as there is some risk connected with it as one does not know the requirements of the foreign *bonga*, he will make arrangements to send him back at once, for by himself he will not return. If either is not done the consequences are disease and death in the house.

Another spirit that must be exercised[1] is *Kisar bonga*. The *Kisar bonga* is of a rather uncertain character. A man who has got such a *bonga* into his house will be wealthy through him as he steals from others and carries all to the house of his master, but if he is offended there is no end to the mischief he will make. If on his account disease is brought into a

1 [Erratum: this should read "exorcised." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

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whatever you wished would have come to pass. You could have wound a string round one of those sticks and then if you had taken the string along with you to a cock fight you would have had good fortune, and the same would apply in hunting. But if you did not behave properly towards it and make offerings to it, it could finish you off and eat you. So that is what it is all about, and now that person will stay around anywhere at all and frighten people. He has become a *bhut*.'"

One of the methods by which it is possible to steal the powers of a dead magician, or rather to capture his "soul force", was explained in the following manner. It is necessary to go to the spot where he was cremated and there draw a picture of the dead man on the ground. If one made offerings to this picture and recited the appropriate spells, he could be brought under control. Some years ago, when a well-known *ojha* in the village of Bankadaha had died, his disciples kept guard over the spot where he had been cremated for some time after his death.

When the Santal *ojha* is called in about a case of sickness or of sudden death, his first function is to try to determine the type to which the particular misfortune belongs. He consults the oracles in order to discover whether natural causes are to blame, in which case it is called plain *rog*, or sickness, or whether it is necessary to lay the responsibility on a witch, a *boŋga* or a displeased ancestor. He sits down in the courtyard and waits until two *sarjom* leaves and some mustard oil in a leaf cup are brought to him. Holding one of the leaves in his left hand, he dips his right index finger in the oil and sprinkles some drops on the ground as an offering to the spirits. While doing so he asks for guidance in determining the correct cause of the illness or fatality. He then puts a drop of oil into each of the compartments of the leaf that he is holding, one drop representing one possible agency of evil. There is one for natural causes, three or four for different *boŋgas*, and other drops represent households in which there may be a witch, including the sick man's house, his father-in-law's house, the houses on the other side of the village street, and so on. When the drops are in position the *ojha* rubs the two leaves together and then holds the first leaf up to the light to discern the shapes that have been taken by the oil. He pronounces the cause of the disease in accordance with the pattern that he sees. If he decides that the *boŋgas* are displeased, he performs the ceremony known as *bal mayam* in much the same manner as the village co-priest does during the festivals. The blood which he

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CHAPTER 12

DEATH

761 152 It is far easier to describe the actions of the Santals in the face of death than to reduce their beliefs concerning death and the destiny of man's soul to any system. Under the stress of bereavement the behaviour of the men is stoical, in somewhat marked contrast to the behaviour of the majority of the peoples among whom they live. The women, however, give full vent to the expression of their grief and voice their lamentations in words that are poetical in form and content. As soon as a death 764 has occurred, preparations are made for the burning. Cremation is the almost universal rule, although there are certain signi- 766 ficant exceptions. Children who die before puberty are buried with little ceremony in shallow graves on the edge of the forest, and though thorns are placed over the grave to protect the body from wild animals, such graves are often disturbed. Men and women who have died from certain diseases are buried in the same manner, a fact that accounts for the often unsavoury condition of the patch of jungle that adjoins the compound of the Mission Hospital at Sarenga. This is particularly true of those [164] who die from tuberculosis, which is known to the Santals as *khok' ajar*, or "cough fever", and leprosy, which is called the "great disease". When deaths occur in the village from these causes or from some other infectious disease such as smallpox, the living avoid contact with the dead bodies as far as possible. The body of the dead person is fastened to a rude stretcher made with *sarjom* saplings, and the stretcher is then yoked to a pair of bulls which drag it out of the village. There the body is left after a token burial with a few handfuls of earth, and the task of corpse 764 disposal is left to the vultures and jackals. In some villages [184] burial is the custom because of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient firewood.

[624] In the usual course of events the *godet'* goes through the village calling on every house to contribute its share of the wood for the burning. From each house one of the men takes a stick for the burning to the bereaved home, while one of the women takes along a small amount of oil and turmeric for anointing the body, and, if the dead person be a married woman, some vermilion in addition. When all have gathered, the corpse is washed and rubbed all over with the oil and turmeric; in the case of a married woman fresh vermilion is put on her forehead and in

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765 769 the departed spirit who has now taken his place with the ancestors. His son remains under an obligation to name him at the time of the family sacrifices, and his widow owes to him and to herself certain marks of her widowhood. She wears no flowers or vermilion in her hair and she leaves off the iron bangle given her in marriage. Now, however, the family is free to resume normal relations with the world of men and of spirits, for once again they can marry and give in marriage.

• 761 Death is essentially an interruption of the normal processes of living. In the conditions under which the Santals live it is often sudden in its onslaught; it descends upon a house unexpectedly and usually as a cruel visitant, for the number of those who live to enjoy a peaceful old age is small. It is never due to accident, for this is a concept beyond the range of Santal philosophy, and the living take pains to discover the cause of every death that occurs, for their own protection. Unless steps are taken to prevent a recurrence it is common belief that at least three deaths will take place in quick succession. But it remains wrapped in [538] mystery. In one of the folk-tales it is told how a woman craved a boon from a holy man: "Give me this boon, to know where the *jivi* goes when we die and by what road does it depart, through the mouth or through the nose, and having departed where does it go? Give me to see what happens. Tell me also when I shall die and when I have died where will my *jivi* go?" Man is com-
795 828 [794] pounded of two different substances, *horno*, or body, and *jivi*, or soul; these are sometimes separated in dreams, and the final separation in death is a fact that none can deny, but what happens then? Death figures in many sayings that express the [539] sense of the unknown. "In this life", runs one saying, "there is eating and drinking and the wearing of clothes. In the next life who knows what there is?" Some will tell that on death the soul [538] of man enters into a large lizard, the *ghinni*.[1] One story that has a wide currency tells of two men who lay down to rest at the foot of a tree. One of them fell asleep and the other was amazed to see a large lizard coming out of the mouth of his sleeping companion. When the latter awoke he said that in his dream he had been led to a place where treasure lay buried. Yet another common saying expresses scepticism concerning this belief. "Whether after death I shall become a common lizard, *kakya*, or a large lizard, I know not." This saying is used to give expression to the ancient materialist principle of behaviour: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

[1] Probably *Tiliqua rubricosstris*.